

## **ATHENS-CLARKE COUNTY LIBRARY BOARD OF TRUSTEES**

### **Minutes of January 9, 2024 Meeting**

**ACCL, Boardroom, 4:00 pm**

Chair Russell called the meeting to order at 4:00 pm. Trustees in attendance are Ms. Russell, Ms. Ritter, Mr. Mason, Ms. Bogue, Ms. Pratt, Ms. Leitch, Ms. Lynch, Ms. Cox, Mr. Woods, Mr. Bray, Mr. Atwater, Ms. Ms. Carter, Ms. Luke, Ms. Hall, and Ms. Brickman. Staff members present were Ms. Bell, Ms. Price, Ms. Green, Ms. Shull, Ms. Lavengood, Ms. Mayfield, Ms. Plaksin, and Ms. Calia.

**Announcements:** Chair Russell introduced new trustees to the Athens-Clarke County Library Board of Trustees. Luther Atwater, Molly Pratt, Paul Kurtz, Natalie Luke, and Sally Leitch (Winterville Liaison) were welcomed by the Board.

**Public Comment:** Community member and patron Joseph Spencer Rich was given 3 minutes to address the Board. Mr. Rich stated that he presented today to appeal the one year ban he was given on 11/28/23 due to repeatedly breaking the rules and patron behavior policy of the library. Mr. Rich stated he was not guilty of the offenses that led to the ban. Mr. Rich asked the Board to lift the ban as he has been a patron of ACCL for several years. Chair Russell thanked Mr. Rich for his time. Mr. Rich was informed that he would receive a written decision once the Board has discussed the appeal and made a decision. Mr. Rich left the meeting.

#### **Approval of Minutes:**

- The draft minutes of the October 10, 2023 meeting were unanimously approved. (motioned by Ms. Cox, seconded by Mr. Woods)

#### **Approval of Agenda:**

- The January 9, 2024 meeting agenda was adopted. Unanimously approved. (motioned by Ms. Bogue, seconded by Ms. Hall)

#### **Financial Report:**

Ms. Lavengood presented Financial Report FY2024-Q2 to the Board. Financial Report FY24-Q2 was unanimously accepted. (motioned by Ms. Lynch, seconded by Mr. Woods.

#### **Committee Reports:**

- Friends of the Library  
In Ms. Linthicum's absence, Ms. Green gave the report. She invited everyone to the Friends of the Library Spring Book Sale scheduled for the week of March 17, 2024.

● **Winterville**

Ms. Leitch gave the report. The Winterville Board of Trustees met this past Monday. The library was the recipient of an Amish rocking chair donation to which they were very grateful.

The library continues to offer chess classes on the 1st and 3rd Tuesday of each month and will soon begin to offer classes to adults.

Ms. Leitch was happy to report that the library's flooring will be repaired soon.

Patrons of the library are participating in "Library Lover" videos.

● **Foundation**

Ms. Bogue gave the report. She reported the Merrill Lynch account at approximately \$1,967,000. This figure includes gifts allotted to the East Side Branch.

**Director's Report:**

Ms. Bell gave the report.

She began with an ADP update. Ms Bell thanked Business Manager, Lorrie Lavengood and Assistant Director, Sue Plaksin for their hard work. Ms. Lavengood handled the accounting aspect, while Ms. Plaksin managed the Human Resources side. The conversion was challenging. Ms. Bell was happy to report that ADP successfully processed the November and December payroll. Once again, she thanked the team for their dedication throughout the process.

Moving forward, the focus is on transitioning to a paperless timekeeping system. The team is currently planning this transition and have selected staff members who will be responsible for training others on the new system.

Ms. Bell took this opportunity to revise the pay schedule for part-time staff. She was pleased to announce that part time staff will now be paid bi-weekly instead of monthly, while salaried staff will remain on a monthly pay schedule. She and the former Business Manager had been trying to achieve this for quite some time.

Ms. Bell reported that as part of the strategic plan, she has started to attend Board of Commission meetings on a monthly basis.

The trustees received the ARLS Strategic Activity Plan. Ms. Price has organized the activities into a KanBan tool that the Resource Team will use to monitor and track progress.

Ms. Bell continued. As reported in the quarterly IT report, the A/V equipment in the library's multipurpose rooms are outdated and malfunctioning. An estimate of \$70,000 was received to cover necessary repairs and upgrades. She has requested \$30,000 for this project in the budget and also submitted a request for MRR funds. SPLOST funding may also be needed to complete the project.

The library now has a passport photo booth that allows patrons to conveniently use their debit/credit card and take their own passport photo before applying for a passport. The library receives a percentage of the fees from this service. Ms. Bell stated that we have been pleased with both the

user-friendliness and resulting profit. She thanked Ms. Green and Ms. List for their efforts in bringing this service to the library.

Ms. Bell thanked Collections Manager, Lindsay Josey and the entire Collections Department for their hard work and dedication in bringing Hoopla to the library. Hoopla is a streaming service available to library card holders that allows patrons access to movies, television series, music, audiobooks, and more. As of now, we have 645 registered patrons, and 481 active users. Hoopla is quite popular with over 1,714 items circulated so far.

The library continues to hold programs of interest to the community. This is reflected in the quarterly reports of our adult, teen, children's, and Heritage Room services. The recently formed English Conversation Group developed by Reference Librarian, Laura Stiles, has become very popular. The program helps adults who speak English as a second language practice their English vocabulary and idioms.

The ACCL Heritage Room was recently honored with the Award for Excellence in Archival Program Development by a Local History Repository or Local Government. The award recognizes outstanding work in archives and records in Georgia. Ms. Bell thanked Heritage Room Librarian Ashley Shull, and the entire Heritage Room staff.

Ms. Bell gave an IRS update. She and Ms. Lavengood was scheduled to meet with IRS Agent Kayode on 12/16/23, however, Agent Kayode spoke with the library's attorney regarding the matter. The senior revenue officer was not available for the meeting, resulting in the meeting having to be rescheduled. Mr. Kayode stated that he would reschedule the meeting. This has not happened yet. Additionally, we have received confirmation from the IRS that payments for 2010 and 2015 civil penalties have been received.

Staff Development Day was a great success. Ms. Bell expressed gratitude to co-chairs Ms. Shimobi-Obijuru and Ms. Shull for all their hard work. She also thanked staff members who served on the planning committee. The Oconee County Library won the Staff Distinction Award.

Ms. Bell is requesting the Board's permission to make an amendment to the budget. Due to the necessary revision to accommodate the increase in health insurance costs, \$10,000 was reallocated from the security budget request. The amendment would allow us to maintain security coverage throughout all open hours. (Action Item)

Additionally, Ms. Bell is requesting the Board's permission to meet with the Finance Committee and the Executive Board to discuss the possibility of transferring some reserve funds into a Georgia Fund 1 account or another type of interest bearing account. (Action Item)

Finally, Director Bell provided an update on her meeting with ACCUG officials regarding security concerns at the library. Attendees included Mayor Kelly Girtz, County Manager Blaine Williams, Assistant County Manager Josh Edwards, Police Chief Jerry Saulters, Facilities Director Andre Saunders, Housing and Community Development Director Roderick Wallace, Housing and Community Development Assistant Director Melinda Lord, and Housing and Community Development Homeless Specialist Lillian Sronkoski. Staff members present included Trudi Green, Sue Plaksin, Darcy Calia, Theresa Price, Elsie Stangle, Phoenix Security owner Rivington Kendrick, Wright & Wright Custodial owner Bobby Wright, and ACCL Board Chairperson Jane Russell. The meeting aimed to inform county officials about daily challenges

faced by the library and explore potential partnerships to address these issues. County officials pledged assistance with litter problems, while Chief Saulters committed to dispatching patrol cars after hours and at intervals throughout the day. Ms. Bell will provide updates to the Board on any progress made in this regard.

### **Communications: None**

### **New Business:**

- Appoint trustees to vacant positions on Regional, Finance, Building & Grounds, and Book & Media Action Committees - Chair Russell will send an email out to trustees with details of committee assignments. If a board member is interested in sitting on a committee, they should reach out to Ms. Russell via email.
- Ms. Ritter welcomed special guest Rick Dunn, Executive Director of WXAG's "Education Matters" student-run program. She suggested a potential partnership with Mr. Dunn's program, citing PLAY card data that indicates low teen usage compared to other school-aged children. Mr. Dunn provided an overview of "Education Matters," highlighting the opportunity to advertise on the program as a means to connect with teens in the community.

"Education Matters" is a weekly radio show focusing on the importance of high school completion and pursuing further education. Hosted by local middle and high school students, the program covers civic, social, and educational topics relevant to youth. It airs every Saturday at 9 am on WXAG 92.7/1470 am.

Mr. Dunn introduced Fredrell Green, now a student at Morehouse College, who initially encountered "Education Matters" during high school summer camp. Mr. Green praised the program, crediting it with helping him develop skills, build connections, and foster teamwork. He encouraged the library to support youth by partnering with "Education Matters" to create similar enriching experiences for local youth.

Mr. Dunn concluded by emphasizing that advertising during his program could effectively reach teens and inform them about the library's services and resources. He presented details about advertising packages. He expressed a willingness to create a package that would fit the library's budget. He thanked the Board for their time and consideration.

Ms. Bell thanked Mr. Dunn for the information and stated that the library's PIO would be in touch.

Ms. Bell then took the opportunity to share the Year In Review graphic created by PIO, Ms. Calia. The graphic shows a consolidated view of library usage and statistics so far.

- Update on revision of bylaws - Mr. Woods presented the board with suggested revisions to the bylaws regarding digital meetings. He proposed including the following text to Section 3:
  - *"Under circumstances necessitated by emergency conditions involving public safety or the preservation of property or public services.."*
  - *"...and means are afforded for the public to have simultaneous access to the meeting."*
  - *"On any other occasion of a meeting, so long as a quorum is present in person, a member may participate via internet meeting service if necessary due to reasons of health or absence from the jurisdiction so long as the other requirements of an ACCL Board meeting are met. Absent emergency conditions or the written opinion of a physician or other health professional that reasons of health prevent a member's physical presence, no member shall participate via internet meeting more than twice in one calendar year."*

## **Board Actions**

- Approval of \$10,000 to fund security guard services for all 70 hours the library is open. Unanimously Approved. (motioned by Ms. Bogue, seconded by Mr. Mason)
- Approval to form a team from the Finance and Executive Committees to discuss investing reserve funds. Unanimously Approved. (motioned by Ms. Bogue, seconded by Mr. Mason)
- Revision of bylaws to include digital meeting text. Unanimously Approved. (motioned by Ms. Bogue, seconded by Ms. Cox)
- Discussion and vote on banning appeal - Trustees discussed the incidents that led to Mr. Rich's one year ban from the library. Director Bell added that this was not the patron's first offense. The library strives to be a welcoming environment and sympathetic to all. Staff must follow a banning matrix. The patron behavior policy is posted throughout the library and is also printed on postcards. Mr. Rich repeatedly violated rules. Ms. Russell stated that Mr. Rich was initially only banned for a month, but decided to come back before the ban was lifted and was caught urinating on library grounds. These two offenses led to the year long ban.

The Board voted to uphold Mr. Rich's one year ban from the library. Unanimously approved. (motioned by Mr. Bray, seconded by Mr. Mason)

## **Old Business: none**

**Meeting was adjourned at 5:40 p.m. by Chair Russell.** Unanimously approved.

**Next Meeting - April 9, 2024 at 4:00 p.m.**